

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2006

Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
Homeland Security Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
B307 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Judd Gregg  
Chairman  
Homeland Security Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
SD-135  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Martin Sabo  
Ranking Member  
Homeland Security Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Robert Byrd  
Ranking Member  
Homeland Security Appropriations  
Subcommittee  
SD-196  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Gregg and Ranking Members Sabo and Byrd:

As you continue conference consideration of the Fiscal Year 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, we are writing to urge you to provide the United States Coast Guard's Integrated Deepwater System with at least \$993.6 million in FY07, as well as \$184 million in supplemental FY06 funding as included in the Senate passed bill.

As you know, Deepwater is an ambitious procurement program to replace the service's aging fleet of ships and aircraft with more flexible assets to meet the multi-mission challenges of today. Deepwater will provide for new cutters, surveillance assets and Command & Control, Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR), which will allow the service to "push out the borders" and meet other homeland security mission requirements, while ensuring adequate resources to effectively sustain their traditional missions.

The need for a complete recapitalization of Coast Guard assets is compelling. The service operates the second oldest naval fleet in the world. In fact, some currently operating assets were commissioned in WWII. The age and obsolete nature of the assets, coupled with the significantly increased post 9/11 operations tempo has brought the situation to the point where the Coast Guard is suffering an increasing number of disturbing operational asset failures that are resulting in the direct loss of several hundred patrol days annually. This severely diminishes the service's ability to respond to terrorist threats and conduct its other vital missions.

The \$993.6 million in FY07 funds and the \$184 million in supplemental FY06 funding will help put the program on track for completion over the next 20 years. Full funding will advance deliveries and reduce the heavy financial burden of maintaining obsolete and worn-out assets that are draining away recapitalization funds. Replacing less effective assets with modern, efficient platforms is a sound investment that will enable the Coast Guard to provide a persistent presence at sea and in our nation's busy ports and waterways.

Deepwater will establish a deployable, preemptive capability to prevent or affirmatively stop the movement of terrorists and their weapons before they reach the homeland. We need this robust security capability to prevent terrorism from compromising the international supply chain of goods between our nation and the world. The loss of one or more of our key ports, even temporarily, would cost the economy billions of dollars.

While we certainly recognize the constraints on our budget, for every year we delay the purchase of new assets both our Coast Guardsmen and women and our taxpayers lose in two ways. First, the cost of maintaining existing assets is dramatically increasing, eroding the already scarce resources available to purchase replacement assets, while increasing the total cost of the program. Second, new, more capable assets are not available to improve the performance of the service's operations, undermining their ability to keep our ports and waterways safe and secure.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to ensure the Coast Guard has the resources it needs to continue to effectively serve our nation.

Sincerely,

John L. Benoit

Don Jory

Jim. J. Jorgensen

Robt. DeFazio

Steve Kelly

Edwin L. Engel

Barry Lamb

Eliza E. Cummings  
Gene Taylor

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Richard D. Thompson

Robert E. Hall

Bill DeLamater

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Edw. A. Cox

Walter B. Jones

Samuel Jackson

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Wm. W. Wyle

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